

Neon Babylon Evangelion Revelations Part 1.4

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Summary: Misato Katsuragi and Jeffrey Sinclair get involved in an air-air battle against Shadow forces in order to meet with Sheridan's White Star.

Neon Babylon Evangelion Revelations Part 1.4

NEON BABYLON EVANGELION

>by Andres D. Lapadula V.

>Chapter IV: Under Pressure

>

> As the car they traveled on came to a stop, Shinji Ikari's facial expression went from confusion to plain disbelief. This was impossible, and no one in their sane mind would believe such a tale.

> "I'm sorry, Mr. Sinclair, but don't you think that this is a little bit far fetched for anyone to buy."

> Major Misato Katsuragi leaned forward on her chair. "Give me a break, Shinji. Or haven't you seen weird enough thing at NERV?"

> "Sure have. Nothing like this though. You mean to tell me that you came from the future to save us, or did I just thought I heard that?"

> Misato exhaled in frustration. She had to admit it, he could be pretty close minded when he wanted to.

> (Can't say I blame him with the kind of crap he's gone through.)

>"This was not my idea, Mr. Ikari. Major Katsuragi was the one who wanted to bring you here. Since I don't need people who know nothing of what's going on around me I chose to tell you about the situation. If you want to understand it, it's up to you." Said Sinclair from his seat on the front part of the car.

>Shinji turned his attention from Misato to Sinclair then back to Misato.

> "I can't believe you are buying this kind of thing. You are supposed to be an officer for Heavens sake, next thing you know he's gone be saying 'I am your father'."

>(Uh oh, bad choice of words.)

> "First thing: bring my father into this again and I'll break you neck."

> Misato's expression changed from annoyed to threatening to anger.

> "And second: had you seen what I saw, you wouldn't be so esceptic about this Okay. You have no idea what it feels like when the fate of the human race depends on you and you don't even begin to understand know are you supposed to fight an enemy that you can not shoot or stab, not even kill."

> "Yes I do. Been there, done that. And not just me, but every one I've ever care about has been hurt or killed or worst in the process."

> "I know, and I am sorry to have to bring you into this, but I have my reasons." Misato stopped, gathered her thoughts then continued. "If this gets out of control they will hurt you, they will hurt Asuka, they will hurt every one of those involved on any side that's not their own. I was not going to let that happen to the ones I care for. Even if it means risking my own life."

> There was something about her words, her eyes at that moment that made him wonder about was she was telling him, She had set her heart and soul on this.

> (And all she wants is my support.)

> "Okay, I'm in. So what happens now?"

> "I thought you'd never ask." Said Sinclair as he pressed one of the buttons on the console to his right.

> "C&C," James Sisko's voice came back over the small devise.

> "Is every thing set, Lieutenant?"

> "Aye, sir. Perimeter secure."

> "Good." He turned off the comlink then turned towards them. "Lets get going, shall we."

> Almost as if on cue the door to his left opened and Shinji stepped outside. He was amazed to find himself standing in the middles of an airfield, concrete runways and tan building extended for miles. He saw that there other people running from what looked to be hangars, he also noticed that there was ordnance and equipment been carried around.
 (It seems that they are preparing for combat.) As soon as he finished that thought he turned to look at Misato. She just shrugged.
>

>*****

>
 (The human mind is such a wonderful thing. Capable of emotions as love and peace, and yet also capable of hatred and fear. This represents the very nature of the human race. It must have been some sort of joke that an entire species depended on such a thing. But, just as members of a race or even a family can be different , so can the mind. Humans have always believed that they can control the mind. In truth it is the mind that controls them. And sometimes it is easier for the mind to shut itself from reality, It was indeed an unstable thing.)
>
 Peter Schmichael pressed his fingertips against the cold glass that separated him from the room in front. There he saw her, the Second Child, laying on a bed, unmoving, fed intravenously, almost dead. The only sign that could confirm that girl was still alive was the constant beeping of the machine that recorded her heart rate and breathing.
>
The sight itself was awful. He had learned the weaknesses of the mind a long time ago, but he was a telepath. He was trained to exploit those weaknesses. It was certainly a shame that such great potential had to be wasted like this. Maybe that's why the Corps want

her.

>
 He tried to shut the image away and concentrate on the mind behind the lifeless features drawn on the girls beautiful face. Slowly the lights in the room darkened, silence. Like the silence one must feel in the void of space, like in a grave. It was not because of any electrical malfunctions, It was because of his abilities.

>
 This was the only quiet moment for a telepaths mind, even when they were not scanning, there was always a rumbling sound on the back of their heads, a permanent reminder of what they were, but now, inside this place where there is no time and space, there was silence.

>
 (Where am I? What is this place?) Came a voice from somewhere in the darkness. Slowly the darkness itself began to change, it revealed the form of a red haired 15 year old girl standing on the Greek letter Y symbol. Oddly enough he had trained himself to visualize the symbol every time he scanned someone.

>
 (This is the place that exists inside your mind, Where there are no rules that can't be broken. This is the place we come to when we dream or hope or fear. We feel safe in this place, but I need you). Peter said, words unspoken.

>
 (Who or what are you?) Said the girl.

>
 (My name is Peter Schmichael and I am the same as you.)

>
 (Get out of my mind.)

>
 (I won't hurt you)

>
 (GET OUT!!)

>
 (I need you. They need you).

>
 The girl turned away from him.

>
 (I want to give you that what you want the most.)

>
 (How can you know what I want? You don't even know me.)

>
 (Do you want to pilot EVA?)

>
 Now the girl looked at him over her shoulder, with those blue eyes or hers, he could tell that she was interested now.

>
 (Yes.)

>
(Then come with me and I will show you the door.)

>
 There was silence then he spoke again.

>
 (Who are you?)

>
 (The Second Child Asuka Langley Soryu)

>
 (What do you want?)

>
 (To pilot EVA)

>
 (Who do you trust?)

>
 (Myself.)

>
 (Remember this words for they are your future and your fate:

'The Corps is Mother, the Corps is Father. We are the children of the Corps.)

>

>*****

>Shinji Ikari could not help but stare at the thing standing a few feet away from him. Whether it was human or not he couldn't say but it gave him the creeps. A single thought came back to his mind. Everything they had told him was true. Could this be really happening.

>Misato had gone with Sinclair to who know where so he found it rather uncomfortable that the two of them were standing alone inside a hangar with a F-22 Raptor for company. The craft was already loaded with the standard AIM-7, AIM-9 missiles and what looked like a bunch of AIM 120A AMRAAMs . It's stealth design and light gray color made it look more elegant than any piece of weaponry had a right to. He also noticed that unlike the other Raptors he'd seen this one had a two seated cockpit.
 The hangar was not much to look at, plain

white, with some devises that he could not yet figure out what they were.

>
Shinji changed his attention from the fighter the his out-of-this-world companion. Maybe it was time to establish a close encounter of the 'what the hell is going' on kind.

>
"S-So, who are you?" He said, trying to keep speech as simple as possible.

>(Maybe it didn't understand our language.)

>"Kosh." The thing in a mechanic voice. Slowly changing it's elongated shaped head to look at him.

>"Oh,...and that would be a..."

>"Vorlon."

>There was something about the way he said the word, it sounded as if inside his mind the word had another meaning. As if he had known the word all his life.

>"So Mr. Kosh, do you have any idea as to what's happening here?"

>The Vorlon said nothing.

>"Hey, Shinji..." He heard Misato's voice coming from the front part of the hangar so he turned and the gasped.

>The dark blue haired woman was wearing a G suit, a combat pilot uniform. Besides her Sinclair stood slipping on his gloves, dressed in the same way. She walked up to him, all the while paying more attention at the fighter that at anything else.

>"Please tell me you are not doing what I think you are doing." He said

>"So what's the big deal? It's not like I haven't been on a supersonic state of the art fighter before." She said, planting her right hand on her hips.

>"Well have you..."

>"No. But that's not the point."

>"So what is?"

>Her expression changed from annoyed to embarrassed.

>"I'm not really sure."

>"The point is that it is something that needs to be done." Sinclair said. None of them had noticed the gray haired man coming up from the place he was standing.

>Shinji shook his head. Then looked again at the man.

>"Tell me something Mr. Sinclair. If you come from the future how come you are using Raptors for combat? I mean, you've got to have something more advanced, right?"

>"OK you try to get spare parts for 23rd century technology, and besides the only fighters that are capable of atmosphere flight are modified Thunderbolt-Class Starfuries." He stopped. Then gave Kosh a firm stare which left an air as if there were things been unsaid. "And besides this is a YF-22B Training Advanced Tactical Fighter. This baby should do just fine. We have Mark 3 AMRAAMs, plus Phoenix and our very own plasma cannons. Enough firepower to kill anything in our way."

>"I thought this planes carried the weapons on the inside." Said Misato.

>"Well yes, but the bombs bay is filled with as much external fuel tanks as we could find. Since Stealth is not to do us any good where we are going we had to load everything on the outside."

>Sinclair checked his watch.

>"It's about time, we better get going." He turned to the Raptor. "Major, you take front seat and don't touch anything unless I say so." He said pointing at the cockpit.

>Misato nodded, then turned to Shinji.

>"Are you gonna be OK?"

>"Me, sure. It's you the one I'm Worried about."

>"Don't. Sinclair knows what he doing." She looked at the man with the corner of her eye "You DO know what you are doing, right?"

>The man just narrowed his eyes, and frowned.

>"Just get on the damn plane."

>"Take care." Shinji said placing his right hand on her shoulder.

>"You too."

>Now she faced Sinclair, already clinging the ladder at the side of the fuselage. She climbed first , looking back at Shinji as she reached the top of the ladder and sat herself on the front seat. Then had to fight to get the safety belt from underneath her, while at the same time she wondered about all the LCD panels and instruments on the control board. There was everything from a laser sight to a FLIR and weapons configurations. She strapped the helmet on and noticed it also carried a sight plus visual displays and flight information.

>"Clear the hangar will you." Said Sinclair as he climbed the ladder.

>Kosh turned away from the fighter and Shinji followed him. Hearing the sound of the electrical systems that lowered the canopy in place .

>As they reached the nearest door Shinji spoke.

>"Does he really knows what he's doing?"

>The Vorlon turned, the small dot in the center of it's face narrowed in imitation of a frown.

>"Sinclair thinks he knows all the answer, but he must find out just much of what he knows is actually true. Which is not important."

>"If that's not important then what is?"

>"The only one know needs to know and understand the Shadows is your friend. It is sad that humans can not see beyond the darkness in which they exist. If she can not she the darkness, then the darkness will consume her."

>As they exited the hangar, Shinji heard the thundering roar of the jet engines powering up.

>"And if the darkness consumes her..." Kosh continued. "...may the universe help us."

>

>*****

>
By the time Peter Schmichael had finished his request the look on Dr. Akagi's face change from interest to denial.

>
"Absolutely no way I'll authorize such a thing." She said over the cup of coffee she held. "performing an activation test with Unit 06 would take time we don't have and besides..."She paused to take a zip of coffee then continued "...You don't really expect it to synch with Asuka , do you? It's imposible at this point. She lost it already. How can you change that? The Commander will never let this happen, so forget it."
>
"So you say, but this is not originating from me. The Corps wants this test to take place. The ability to pilot the Eva is very rare, they want all available pilots ready at a moments notice. That includes her."
>
"Even if we allow this to happen, what makes you think you can do anything to change the situation."
>
Peter smiled slightly. "Do you have any idea of what my telepath level is?"

>
Ritsuko shook her head. "No, and I can't say I care."

>
"P12."

>
"Uh, higher than I had expected. I would have given you a P9 or P10."

>
"I can get a monkey to pilot if you let me try,"

>
"I won't spare you the monkey, not to mention the Second Child so forget it. Not gonna happen." She finished the coffee and placed the cup down on the table. Picked the papers she had brought in and locked eyes with the boy. "You can be all you want, but what you don't understand is that piloting Eva for Asuka means pain. More pain than she can take. I think it's better if we don't let her near a plug suit again. Of course that's my opinion."

>
Peter stood up just as Ritsuko was preparing to do the same. "Who are you to say it gives her pain? Piloting Eva is her goal, her dream. She's happy inside it."

>
"Until her pride takes her straight to hell again, right?"

Ritsuko barked back. Her face locked in a frown.

>
"That's up to her. As long as she can pilot she will be happy. I understand her mind because I can see and feel it. This must be done."

>
"No."

>
"I've already talked to her. She'll cooperate. That's my orders. I've also ran an evaluation test and she is physically fit to pilot."

>
"Physically fit, not mentally or emotionally fit. Besides, she's unconscious."

>
"I took care of that, she's awake."

>
"I won't go for this."

>
"All right, fine." Peter shoved his hand in his jacket pocket and fished a piece of paper. He handled it over to Ritsuko. "As of now the Psi Corps orders you to perform this test."

>
(Oh crap!!!)

>
Ritsuko took the paper from the boy with a sweep of her hand. She opened it, and her eyes narrowed. "If you had an order why the discussion."

>
"I wanted to know. You do care."

>
"Does the Commander know about this?"

>
"Yes"

>
"I can't believe I'm taking orders from a child."

>
Peter smiled again. "I am only the child of the Corps."

>

>*****

>
Sinclair tightened his grip on the control stick as he pulled it slowly until the number on his elevation indicator read 1.0. Then he checked his window and saw that the aircraft had taken off from the hard concrete runway, just as the numbers on his altimeter began to rise. 10 feet, 50, 70.

>
Over the headset on his helmet he heard the voices of the other pilots had taken off prior to them and were already in formation.

>
"Raptor Leader, how nice of you to join us."

>
Sinclair recognized the voice of Nicolai Chevchenko. He looked up and saw the V formation of Russian Su-27 Flankers flying overhead.

>
"Thank you Flanker 01. What's the status on your squad?"

>
"Lock and load, Flankers ready to fire."

>
Sinclair smiled to himself. These were good men. Hard working and skilled. He felt proud of going into battle alongside them.

>
(Talking about hard working) Sinclair switched from the war channel over to his private frequency.
>
"Major Katsuragi, are you still there?"
>
Then answer took a while, but it finally came.
>
"I think I left my brains back there." Said Misato, her voice sounding decisively different. As if she were trying to find a way to speak without letting her heart scape through her words.
>
"Are you OK?"
>
"No. Does it matters?"
>
"Just checking. Stay with me now."
>
Misato picked herself from the depths of the seat as she finished snapping the oxygen mask to the opposite side of the helmet, hopping that more air would prevent her from throwing up all over the instruments board. She tried to level her breathing in long gasps in order to get enough air her brain.
>
"Why do I feel so bad?" She said over the intercom.
>
"It's the speed. Mach 2.1 does that to people." Sinclair said.
"It'll get a lot worse when we start maneuvering."
>
"I'm not gonna make it."
>
"Yes you are. Now pay attention. See that Big LCD screen on the middle of the smaller instruments..."
>
Misato did a quick check and located the screen almost immediately. It was black surrounded by buttons three on both sides, and one on top. "...Press the big one on top."
>
She did. The screen jumped to life. It showed a drawing of the plane indicating the weapons position. It had numbers on both lower corners. One read: AUX NOT OP 234456. And the other ETA T 23:34. She recognized the last as being arrival time.
>
"Now the left button on the left side." Sinclair continued.

>
Misato found it incredible difficult just having to lift her arm to press the button. So it took her a few second to comply. The screen changed. It now displayed a full map of the area divided in quadrants. The map had one yellow line which appeared to be their route. It also showed at least other two dozen fighters represented by small dots each of which had numbers. On the bottom she saw the words: HEADING 190. There were also several other dots located somewhere in the Pacific Ocean. They moved in a direction that would put them in course with the yellow line.
>
(An interception course. But what are we intercepting?)

>
"That's our target. Click the small quadrant that reads T. ONE-FOUR."
>
Misato eyes went wide at what the screen now displayed. It was some sort of ship she had never seen. It was shaped like a bird, an eagle maybe. A machine, yet it looked so alive, it was white. With some sort of wings, pointing forward with what looked like engines on the end. She was amazed at the elegant curves and lines.
>(Whoever built such a thing must be an artist or genius.)

>"That's a White Star, a ship made out of Vorlon and Mimbari technology." Sinclair said.
>"Mimbari?"
>"I'll explain later, or rather someone else will. We are about to face the most dangerous species of things the universe has ever seen. Most of my men won't make it. They know it. I want you to understand just how much are people willing to give in order for this to make sense to you. In the end that's all that's important. I have to talk to my people so hang on a second."

>Sinclair tapped in radio to change channels again. Through his mask he swallowed hard as the inevitable truth came back like it had before. Before this thing started in the first place.

>(And if she doesn't understand? I told Kosh the exact same thing. He like any Vorlon wouldn't listen. The Shadows had a reason to pick her, Maybe they thought she would be easy to turn. The Vorlons in the other hand wanted her dead because of the many influences she had. She works for them, for NERV, the UN and the Shadows. Yet Kosh is not a person to take advice so here I am, with a squadron of pilots heading straight to hell at mach 2).

>The thin curtain of clouds that surrounded the Raptor dissipated as they ascended to cruising altitude. Misato could now gaze at the perpetual blue sky, making an spectacular dome into infinity. She was amazed to find that there were other fighters already flying in a side-to-side formation, just a couple of yards separating each others wings. There were more than two dozens of them, between Raptor and Sukois 27. The Su-27 had the letters of the United Nations on their fuselage and a red star on the tail fins. They were leek shaped, with slim long fuselage and sharp wings. They were also loaded with weapons. The light blue color contrasted with the sky making it look like a carefully planned uniform for the occasion.

>(How did Sinclair get handle of the UN's Su-27?)

>Over the headset she began hearing the pilots chatter as the Raptor moved into the formation. Their Transmissions in different idioms, and various accents. Obviously this was some sort of international force.

>"Roger, Raptor two. We have completely green on the board."

>"Acknowledge, five. Lead is set at one-seven-zero."

>"Curse at three-five-nine. Holding and ready for next check point at 1800. Clear for the rest of the way."

>Then Sinclair voice broke through the mixture of channels. "All right we have the Flankers on our backs. Arm the Phoenixs, I want a shooting solution as soon as we clear the range. Aim for the big Battlecrab. Our missiles won't dent that thing, but they'll send the fighters after us."

>"So we won't get to have fun, Lead." Said one of the pilots with a Russian accent. "Looks like you guys are the spearhead and we have pick your scraps."

>"We'll pair. One Flanker and one Raptor, so that we can take the two on one odds. There's only one dozen of those fighter so we'll have the upper hand." Sinclair said.

>"I'd rather have a fair fight." Said the man with the Russian accent.

>"Well I'd rather get out with my head still attached to my body." Said another man, this one had a slight Arab accent. To Misato it sounded like one of those NYC taxi drivers.

>"Seven is right, do your job and no showing off." Someone else said, another Russian.

>"You got the plan, one." Seven said.

>"Lead, Raptors report Phoenix armed and ready."

>(Well at least they sound confident.)

>

>

>Halfway through the elevator that would take them to the Evangelion cages, Peter Schmicahel, looked from his watch to the girl in the red plug suit standing next to him. As he watched her he couldn't avoid thinking just how beautiful she looked. Maybe if she weren't a mundane he would try a line at her. Maybe.

>"How long had it been since you slept?" he asked tilting his head

slightly to one side. His voice was as even as he could make it. Emotionless. The typical Corps procedure for getting some basic information.

>"A while." If there was anybody who could make a voice sound more dead than that, Peter did not want to meet him, she or it.

>"You should get some."

>"It's kinda funny, you know." Asuka said, not even looking at him. "I always thought that Eva was a machine that I could control, a mindless weapon. Until it blew up in my face."

>"It's not your fault." Peter said. Feeling more than a bit sorry for her.

>"I did this to myself."

>"I don't think so."
"You know what's even funnier. I'm saying these things to you and I don't even know you. I shouldn't be here. I'm useless."

>
Peter folded his arms. Slightly touching the small Y symbol on his chest. He knew what feeling useless meant. Before the Corps had taught him his potential, he felt like this all the time. Unwanted. Different.

>
(It's the kind of feeling that never leaves. You can only hide it, so deep that you forget about, then it comes back. It always does.)

>
"So what's with your plug suit." She asked completely surprising him.

>
"Uh?!"

>
"White orange and blue. How come?"

>
"Reminds me of home. And it's teal not blue. How about you, why red?"

>
Asuka brushed locks of her hair behind her ear.

>
"I forgot. Had something to do with my Mama, though. Can't remember exactly what"

>
"Do you miss her?"

>
Asuka didn't answer. Instead she wrapped her arms around her body. Once again Peter could sense the deep feeling of sorrow, like a dark aura. A telepath did not need to scan someone to know the immediate feelings. Most of them were self-evident. He realized that like himself she would always feel sad because of the mixed emotions towards her mother.

>
(My mother. NO!! the Corps is my mother. I only have the Corps. They care. They are the ones who do really care!!! Why should I feel anything for the woman who left me. She never cared. NEVER!!! You get that through your head. Only the Corps care. Oh shit, focus. The Corps is mother, the Corps is father. We are the children of the Corps.)

>
None of them said anything else until the elevator stopped and the gates opened. Asuka looked at him, just for a moment, as if wondering about his thoughts. Her eyes fixed firmly on his face.

>
"In the end we all call for our mothers." She said, her words echoing in his mind as she walked out of the elevator.

>
"In the end we all do."

>
Peter watched as Asuka walked the final corridor to where the Evas were waiting and felt a chill run up his spine, just as his mind imagined how the red form-fitting plug suit that encased the girl's slender body gleamed almost as if it were blood.

>

>*****

>
The orange glow that had engulfed the White Star's bridge, caused by the atmosphere burning against the hull, disappeared. All

around John Sheridan it was another kind of combustion that flared. Mimbarris running from port to starboard , checking screens, performing tests. It was mayhem. An ordered mayhem.

>
"Lennier, what's the status on that Shadow Battlecrab?" Zack Allan asked standing alongside Sheridan, with the glowing display of their position on a map hovering inches from the projectors.

>
"They've cleared the atmosphere and closing. We can't outrun them. If they get us we are dead." Lennier answered, unable to hide a touch of deception on his words.

>
"We can't go head to head, either." Said Sheridan. " Not even if we get a few shots into it. We'll still be dead."

>
"Maybe if we can..." That's as far as Zack got before the entire ship rocked sending objects and people to the ground. Confusion was evident yet no one panicked.

>
"Status!!!" Sheridan screamed, whipping around to face his aide. "What the hell...?"

>
"Their fighter are shooting at us. The hull can take it unless they gang tackle us. No damage reports coming in." Lennier reported without missing a beat. "If they shoot down our engines we'll fall like a rock, though."

>
Sheridan turned to Zack. Without losing his temper he asked calmly.

>
"Can we go to 95% on the engines?"

>
"Possible, but not recommended." Zack knew what the next order would be so he reached for the communicator.

>
"Propulsion go to 95% on the engines, Weapons I want everything you have at full."

>
Zack relayed the orders.

>
"Helm, bring us to bearing..."

>
"Sir, we have incoming contacts at ONE-ONE-NINE." Lennier cut him before he could finish that last order.

>
"Hostile?"

>
"Can't say. they don't correspond to any of our identification patterns."

>
"Very well. Helm give my coordinates for the new contacts."

>

>*****

>

> The radio cracked again. "Roger, Lead Phoenix ready to go."

>Misato could not care less for the radio. Her attention was completely focused on the huge thing in front of the formation of fighter. It was like a giant spider. Something out of a hellish vision, or from someone's nightmares.

>Suddenly Sinclair's voice brought her back to reality.

>"All right, wait for my mark."

>Misato shook her head to clear it. At least she came up with a rational thought. "Jeffrey, are those..."

>"Shadows. Buckle up, we are in for some nasty flying ahead."

>Sinclair waited for the targeting box displayed in his helmet sight flicked to a solid green indicating a weapons lock.

>"Lead, we have acquired a lock." Said the Russian pilot. One.

>Sinclair rested his thumb on the fire button, just brushing it slightly.

>(No turning back now.)

>"Fire at will!!!"

>He pressed the button firmly. The bulky Phoenix missile ignited and shoot forward leaving behind on it's trail a line of white smoke. It was joined by another dozen missiles. Tracing fine lines across the sky and hissing to destruction.

>The missiles lasted a few second, until flattened against the hull of the Battlecrab. Igniting balls of incandescent fire. All of them direct hits.

>Then his radar began beeping furiously.

>"Incoming fighters at twelve."

>"Did the Flankers made their run?" Sinclair checked his scopes and saw the new series of explosion ripping through the big ship.

>"Affirmative Lead." Said One.

>By now the Battlecrab filled two thirds of his targeting screen. The ETA marked that the Shadow fighter would make contact in twenty seconds.

>"Change missiles to AMRAAMs and engage with your plasma guns, don't try to out fly them. They are still faster and more agile, but since they are in atmosphere they are enslaved by the laws of physics."

>" Roger. Boys well tag team the bastards. Lead are you sure you don't want a partner." One said.

>The fighters shaped like elongated stars crossed their sights with a screeching roar.

>"Here they come. Major hang on to you butt."

>Sinclair tilted the control stick to the right, causing the aircraft to bank in that direction. Then pushed in forward so that the Raptor's nose went below the line of the horizon.

>He looked up through the glass canopy. The Shadows came in hard, firing they green plasma bolts at the squadron. The Raptors immediately broke formation spreading in a dozen different directions. The Flankers followed suit.

>"Evasive maneuvers, Evasive maneuvers!!!!"

>Sinclair jerked the stick and pushed his engines on full. The Raptor ascended with tremendous speed. He felt the G's begin to built on his body. The craft ran out of speed so it turned on it's side, once the nose was again facing down, he leveled the Raptor, now he had the Shadows directly ahead.

>Raptors and Flankers swarmed through the air. Firing twin bolts of plasma at the attackers. One of the Raptors, Seven made a tight roll to the left, but before he could finish the maneuver a needle of energy pierced the fuselage with near impunity. The fighter flew dead for a few seconds the exploded, taking the pilot in a fireball. The Shadow quickly followed, as it was reached by an AMRAAM that send it wounded into Four's line of fire.

>"DIE, DAMN YOU DIE!!!!" Screamed Four. Just before his Flanker was split in half by a Shadow.

>Sinclair brought his sights on the incoming fighter, the small box in his helmet flicked to green as it acquired a solid lock. He pressed the trigger. The Shadow made a vain attempt to shake the AMRAAM , by turning hard to port. The missile adjusted to the maneuver and hit squarely.

>The White Star finished its roll. Just as a beam of light from the huge Battlecrab skimmed by their starboard. The smaller ship lined up against the Shadow and began pounding with it's plasma and lasers. Bright lights exploded through the air, causing an impressive display of fireworks slamming against the dark hull, to no avail.

>Sheridan grinned his teeth as the White Star shook again. Consolated exploded, Bodies send flying, fires burned. The Minbari that handled

weapons control was injured so Zack took his place.

>"Status!!!" Sheridan barked picking himself from the ground.

>"We wont be able to take more hits like that." Lennier answered back. He wiped blood from his brow, then pressed more buttons on the console.

>"Power down to 60%, lateral guns dead, reactor minus 34 to critical."

>"I have the plasma guns on the nose, at 74% and lasers at 32%, everything else is off-line." Said Zack. "That's enough to get out of here."

>"We are going no where. Zack." Sheridan said. Almost all the Mimbaris in the room stopped their jobs and stared at him as he had just come up with the most ridiculous idea in warfare history. "Outside you have people in fighters, shooting at that thing. I don't care who they are, We'll stay and fight alongside them. Understood."

>Everyone in the bridge nodded.

>

>

>Misato stared wide-eyed as a Raptor crossed in front from the canopy, slowly tinting to one side. "Enemy fighter coming in at ONE-THREE. Request back up..."

>The Raptor blew up in a fiery hell. Parts went flying in all directions. A Shadow flew through the small cloud of debris. It didn't made it far before a pair of missiles broke against it.

>All cross the sky deadly dogfights were taking place. Flankers Raptor and Shadows engaged in combat to the death.

>"I said left, Two. Left."

>"Shit it's on my six."

>"Hold on, damn."

>"GET IT OF MY BACK!!!"

>A flash of light burned the heavens. Adding to the disturbing display. The sky was now painted with all kinds of lights, and fighter swarming like flies. Misato felt the entire cockpit rock as the White Star made a fly by. Making an elegant turn , it positioned itself between the huge Battlecrab and the fighters. She also noticed Sinclair was now following the alien ship. The White Star led the run and a second fighter, a Flanker lined up besides them.

>"Lead, this is five. Do we take another shot at it."

>"Affirmative. Fire on my order." Sinclair said.

>The faster White Star got to the target first, swinging from side to side it avoided enemy fire, while spreading it's own deadly volley. More fire smashed against the belly of the Battlecrab. Then it broke hard to port.

>Sinclair and Five let loose all their weapons. Fires ignited on the Shadow vessel. Misato saw horrified as the thing shot back a huge beam of light. Sinclair didn't even twitch. The beam completely disintegrated the Flanker. The Raptor kept its course, skimming the underside of the Battlecrab. The longest seconds in her life, passed as the huge form of the vessel eclipsed the sun.

>(We are going to die!!!)

>The end never came. The Raptor emerged untouched on the other side.

>"Got that son of a..." Static.

>"Pull out Eight!!!"

>"Engines out, weapons out, OH MY..." More static.

>"One to Flankers, report."

>"Eleven, Twelve, nineteen, twenty and Fifteen are down. Request retreat, we wont last much longer."

>"Roger, Ten. Lead we have three more Shadows at ONE-SIX"

>"Take them down, we can't proceed if their fighters are not down." Said Sinclair. "Raptors, forget the big ship, get the fighters."

>"Ten and Fourteen line up with me."

>"Fourteen is no more, One."

>"Sixteen." Said One.

>"On my way."

>Just as Sixteen lined on the formation it was cut down by enemy fire. Ten made a quick turn so that he had his sights on the attacking fighter and shot it down an AMRAAM.

>Sinclair brought in his Raptor.

>"Two more to go."

>All the remaining fighters lined up.

>Sinclair watched the two Shadows exploting, with the multitude of missiles slamming against them.

>"One, open a channel. Give the White Star our exit vectors."

>"You got it Lead."

>

>*****

>
"Incoming communication." Lennier looked painfully from his console. "Audio only."
>
"Put it through." Said Sheridan.
>
"....Repeat, Russian Government Flanker One under The United Nations, We have exit coordinates for your Star. Please follow. Over."
>
"Can we answer?, Mr. Lennier."
>
"Yes."
>
Sheridan thought about it for a few seconds. How could they trust these people, they were 21st century militia. In the other hand there was a Shadow shooting at their tails. If these people had helped them, they should at least know what they were doing, right? No time to second guess now. Either they die now or later it doesn't matter.
>
"Get me a channel."
>
Lennier nodded.
>
"You are on"
>
Sheridan faced the video recorder on the front of his screen, then remembered this was audio only.
>
"Acknowledge , Flanker One, White Star 02 is grateful for your help."
>
"Roger, Turn heading to One-Nine-Zero."
>

>

>

>Sinclair dropped the Raptor on the White Star's rear. One placed his Flanker on front and the rest of the surviving fighters came in positions besides the bigger ship.

>A few minutes had passed since their course heading was fixed to the most straight line to Seattle. They could at least keep the Battlecrab far enough to make it to safe space. They had also loaded the first of three fuel tanks, and dumped the remaining weapons hoping that they wouldn't have to engage again. Otherwise they'd be in serious problem.

>"Major. How are you doing?" He said over a private channel.

>"Someone's gonna have to clean this thing." Misato had taken off the mask so her voice heard as if it was spoken from miles away.

>"What do you mean.?"

>"I mean there's something that looks like Chunky Soup all over the dashboard. "

>"Oh my God, you didn't...?"

>"I did all right."

>"Weren't used to G' forces. You told me you had been on jets before." Sinclair sounded sarcastic.

>"Yes. In F-18 Hornets , and not in combat."

>"Well, the worst is over. We have at least four hours of nice flying so you can catch a nap or something. By the way put you mask back on your brain needs oxygen."

>Misato closed her eyes. She couldn't remember the last time she felt so exhausted. Everything hurt. Even her bones. She waned to sleep. To get out of this freaking G suit. To get a hot shower. There was a nice thought. That would be first thing she did when she got back.

>For now life was so peaceful, but this was just the beginning.

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